

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 IO-14

SY-04 SCCT-02 OMB-01 ACDA-19 SAM-01 SAB-01 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /114 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:TMDEFORD:JFC

APPROVED BY NEA - MR. ATHERTON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 075602

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE, IS

SUBJECT: LEBANESE AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON ASST. SECY. DESIGNATE ATHERTON

REF: BEIRUT 4270

1. AT HIS REQUEST, AMBASSADOR KABBANI SAW ASST. SECY. DESIGNATE ATHERTON LATE THIS AFTERNOON ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM HIS GOVERNMENT. KABBANI'S LINE IN GENERAL PARALLELED LEBANESE PRESENTATION REFTEL. KABBANI SAID MAIN CONCERN OF LEBANESE WERE STATEMENTS BY GOLDA MEIR HOLDING LEBANESE RESPONSIBLE FOR MURDERS AND IMPLICATION THAT ISRAEL MAY LAUNCH RETALIATORY ATTACK AGAINST LEBANON IN ACCORDANCE WITH VIEW THAT THEY WILL ATTACK GOVERNMENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR HARBORING FEDAYEEN.

2. KABBANI ENLARGED ON LEBANESE CLAIM (PARA 4 REFTEL) THAT RAIDERS HAD NOT COME FROM LEBANON BUT FROM
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BASES ALREADY IN ISRAEL. HE REFERRED TO LEBANESE ARMY

MEASURES, PRESENCE OF ISRAELI SOLDIERS AND ELECTRIFIED FENCE ON ISRAELI SIDE OF BORDER, AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS, TO SHOW THAT IT "PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE" FEDAYEEN COULD HAVE INFILTRATED FROM LEBANON. BESIDES, KABBANI

NOTED, LEBANESE HAVE COMMITMENT FROM PLO NOT TO ATTACK ISRAEL FROM LEBANON. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT PFLP-GC WAS NOT MEMBER OF PLO, KABBANI ADDED THAT IN ANY CASE THEY HAD DENIED USING LEBANON, SAYING THEY CAME FROM BASE INSIDE ISRAEL.

3. AMBASSADOR WENT ON TO NOTE THAT LEBANESE GOVERNMENT REGRET LOSS OF INNOCENT LIFE, WHETHER ARAB OR ISRAELI, BUT FROM POINT OF VIEW OF POLITICAL REALISM, THERE NO WAY TO CONTROL AGAINST SUCH ACTS SO LONG AS LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS IGNORED. KABBANI EMPHASIZED THIS DOES NOT MEAN LEBANESE GOVERNMENT APPROVED OF RAID.

4. HE SAID ISRAEL IS USING INCIDENT TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM ITS OWN INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS. HE SAID LEBANESE GOVERNMENT NOT ASKING ANYTHING SPECIAL, BUT IF USG CONSIDERS POINT HE MAKING REALISTIC, PERHAPS WE COULD MAKE VIEWS KNOWN TO ISRAELI SIDE.

5. KABBANI CONTINUED, ISRAELI FORCES HAD STORMED BUILDING IN ORDER KILL THREE FEDAYEEN AND IT NOT POSSIBLE TO SAY THAT ALL CIVILIANS HAD BEEN KILLED BY FEDAYEEN. AMBASSADOR SAID OPERATION HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO GAIN HOSTAGES, AS FEDAYEEN NOTE CLEARLY INDICATED, TO USE FOR EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS. HE DREW PARALLEL BETWEEN OPERATION EXACTLY ONE YEAR BEFORE BY IDF IN BEIRUT IN WHICH INNOCENT AS WELL AS INTENDED HAD BEEN KILLED. HE POINTED OUT THAT HAD LEBANESE ARMY ATTACKED BUILDING IN SAME MANNER AS ISRAELI FORCES DID, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN HIGH CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN RAID ON BEIRUT. KABBANI NOTED THAT ISRAEL HAS INSISTED FEDAYEEN HAD NO INTENTION OF TAKING HOSTAGES. THIS WAS IN ORDER TO BACK UP ISRAELI CLAIM THAT ALL ISRAELIS KILLED HAD BEEN KILLED BY FEDAYEEN, WHEREAS THIS SIMPLY CANNOT BE PROVEN.

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6. PURPOSE OF ACCUSING LEBANON, KABBANI SAID, IS IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT RAID INTO LEBANESE TERRITORY, WHICH CAN ONLY HAVE BAD EFFECT FOR SITUATION IN AREA. IF USG CONCERN IS TO BUILD PEACE, KABBANI CONCLUDED, HE HOPED WE WOULD REALIZE THAT SUCH ISRAELI REACTIONS WOULD DETRACT FROM OUR EFFORTS.

7. KABBANI ADDED, NOT ON INSTRUCTIONS, THAT WITH REGARD TO TWO ISRAELI PILOTS RECENTLY TAKEN BY LEBANESE,

SYRIANS HAVE ASKED THAT LEBANON TURN PILOTS OVER TO THEM, AND WHILE LEBANON HAS MADE IT CLEAR THEY HAVE NO INTENTION OF DOING SO, THERE WOULD BE INCREASED PRESSURE TO DO THIS WERE ISRAEL TO ATTACK.

8. ATHERTON THANKED AMBASSADOR KABBANI FOR HIS VIEWS, SAYING HE WOULD TAKE THEM UNDER ADVISEMENT. HE ADDED THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO SORT OUT FACTS IN SITUATION LIKE THIS. ISRAELIS SAY THEY HAVE ABSOLUTE EVIDENCE THAT FEDAYEEN CROSSED BORDER THAT MORNING. LEBANON SAYS THEY DID NOT. USG, HOWEVER, HAS NO INDEPENDENT WAYS OF CONFIRMING THIS.

9. ON NEW SUBJECT, ATHERTON SAID TO KABBANI THAT ISRAEL HAS APPROACHED THE USG TO APPROACH THE LEBANESE ASKING THAT THEY RETURN THE PILOTS TO ISRAEL. ATHERTON STATED THIS IS A DECISION ONLY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT CAN MAKE, BUT HE DID WANT AMBASSADOR TO KNOW OF THE GOI REQUEST.

10. MEETING TOOK PLACE BEFORE WE RECEIVED REPORT FROM TEL AVIV THAT ISRAELI FORCES WERE OPERATING IN SOUTH LEBANON. KISSINGER

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